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GOVT Special report: International development

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An interdependent world

If the earth fascinated the first astronauts to visit it seemed amazing that so many people could live on such a small planet. Like the astronauts, we are beginning to realize how small the world is and how dependent are its inhabitants.

Trade, political associations, cultural exchanges, friendships and the sharing of a money system, makes its countries interdependent. The interdependence of countries is neither good nor bad; it is inevitable.

Interdependence brings potential benefits to all, but the world is divided into developed and developing countries, collectively called the "North" and "South". They are mainly found in the northern hemisphere, while the developing countries of the southern hemisphere are called the "South".

Half of the world's population lives in the North, including 25 million Canadians. These people earn four-fifths of the world's income. In the North, most people have electricity and are educated at least through high school. They can expect to live more than 70 years.

In the South, where the other three-quarters of the world's population live and earn just one-fifth of the income, only four out of ten children complete more than three years of primary school. In five people suffers from hunger and malnutrition. A Southerner can expect to live, on average, 40 years, less than a Northerner.

In the South, nearly one BILLION people live in miserable conditions. Their basic needs, such as shelter, decent food and employment and a basic education are unmet. One BILLION people are prone to malaria within their lifetime. One quarter of all children die before the age of five.

The South cannot solve its problems without assistance from the North, the North also needs the South. Sustained

economic growth in the North depends upon enlarging the purchasing power of the developing world. If developing countries fail to build healthy economies, they cannot be our future trading partners. For they can only buy goods and services from the North if they earn money through their own exports.

The North depends on the South to supply many of the natural resources needed for industry: rubber, bauxite for aluminum, phosphates for fertilizers. The South also supplies many basic items for Northern diets: sugar, coffee, tea, cocoa.

However, the recent recession has caused the price of many of the South's basic resources to drop sharply. This means they have less money to buy the things they need from us to contribute to their own development.

To help the South knock down the barriers to development, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was established in 1968 by the federal government. In 1981-82 CIDA channeled \$1.47 billion, or .44 per cent of Canada's Gross National Product (GNP) — the total goods and services produced annually — into development efforts. The federal government intends to increase CIDA's budget to .5 per cent of GNP by 1985, and make best efforts to reach .7 per cent by 1990.

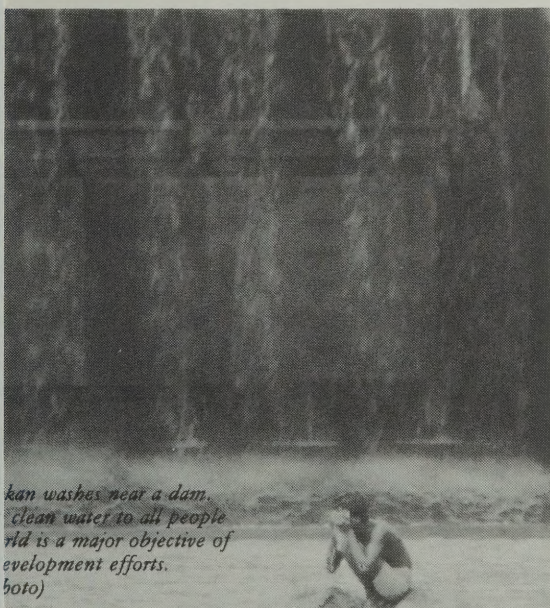
CIDA uses three channels to put Canadian resources to work in the Third World: bilateral (country-to-country assistance), multilateral (support for international organizations) and special programs (support for private sector involvement). Last year, \$666 million was used to carry out more than 1,000 bilateral projects in over 80 countries. About 80 per cent of the money was returned to Canada for the purchase of Canadian goods and services to send to developing countries.

The Multilateral Programs Branch provided \$531 million to support the world-wide development efforts of international financial institutions, the various programs of the United Nations and Francophone and Commonwealth institutions, food-aid programs, and disaster and refugee-relief organizations.

The remaining portion of CIDA's assistance budget went to support the development efforts of Canadian and international non-governmental organizations, and Canadian business, labor and academic groups. Assistance is also given to Canadian firms to establish or expand operations in developing countries.

These efforts are designed to remove many stones on the path to a better world. Yet, in a world of glaring North-South inequalities, huge boulders remain. Every year the world spends \$22 on arms for every \$1 spent on aid.

Canada is uniquely placed to play a leadership role in international development. As a middle-power, we are not seen as a threat by developing countries. Not having been a colonial power, we can engage in world affairs free of the historical baggage which has plagued other nations. Further, we have links with many of the developing countries through the Commonwealth and the Francophonie. Canada has shown that it can play a bridge-building role between the North and the South. Will individual Canadians rise to meet the great social challenge of our time?



Canadian washes near a dam.
Clean water to all people
world is a major objective of
development efforts.
(photo)

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An interdependent world

The view of the earth fascinated the first astronauts to visit the moon. It seemed amazing that so many people could live together on such a small planet. Like the astronauts, we are just beginning to realize how small the world is and how interdependent are its inhabitants.

Through trade, political associations, cultural exchanges, social relationships and the sharing of a money system, humanity makes its countries interdependent. The interdependence of countries is neither good nor bad; it is unavoidable.

Although interdependence brings potential benefits to all, today's world is divided into developed and developing countries. Developed countries, collectively called the "North" because they are mainly found in the northern hemisphere, dominate the developing countries of the southern hemisphere, called the "South".

A quarter of the world's population lives in the North, including 24 million Canadians. These people earn four-fifths of the world's income. In the North, most people have enough to eat and are educated at least through high school. Northerners can expect to live more than 70 years.

In the South, where the other three-quarters of the world's people live and earn just one-fifth of the income, only four out of ten children complete more than three years of primary school. One in five people suffers from hunger and malnutrition. A Southerner can expect to live, on average, 20 years less than a Northerner.

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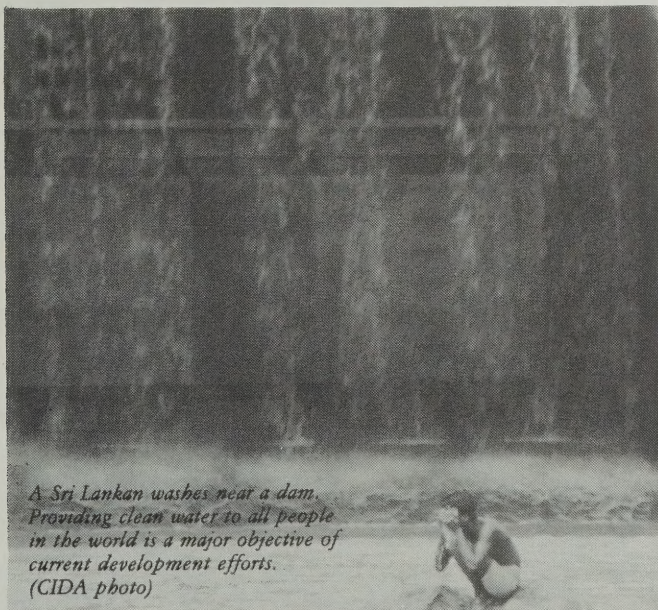
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A Sri Lankan washes near a dam. Providing clean water to all people in the world is a major objective of current development efforts. (CIDA photo)

Women's work is never done

In the Third World, women do 60 to 80 per cent of the work. But, because of social values, prejudices, etc., it is men who receive most of the education, opportunities and income.

The need to improve women's lives cannot be separated from the need for development in the Third World. For the lack of involvement of women is a barrier that slows overall social and economic progress. Comprising half of the population, their input is vitally important for development policies, plans and projects.

International development agencies are learning that they must find out who makes the decisions if aid dollars are to have the desired impact. Because of the myth that farmers are always men, men have traditionally received almost all the training and technology for improving agriculture — even though women are the main food producers. Fifty per cent of agricultural production and *all* of the food processing for domestic consumption are done by women in most rural areas. While men most often receive skills training in new technology, women are not included as often in the modern sectors. Instead, their domestic roles are emphasized over their economic needs and political rights. Decisions on family size in many cultures are usually taken by men who view large families as insurance for care of their property in old age.

Throughout the world urban drift is increasing as people leave the countryside for the promise of the city. In poorer countries, it is mainly the men who are leaving. This can lead to a lot of hardship for the women left behind. A project sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is helping ease the situation in Lesotho. Two diamond mine cooperatives are employing both men and women. Previously, the men left home to work in South African mines: now the families are united, as men and women both contribute to their welfare.

In Zimbabwe some abandoned mothers have tried to do something about their situation and have formed the Simbasadenga Women's Cooperative. The objective is to provide their families with food and a basis for earning money themselves. Plots of one-fifth of a hectare are assigned at a cost of 50 cents per month. The women grow anything they wish on the plots and help each other with the marketing and distribution of their products.

Women in Quebec and the prairie provinces have lots of experience running rural cooperatives. CIDA is tapping the prairie experience for use in Bangladesh where it sponsors four projects, each dealing directly with 2,000 women. The projects provide training in knitting, sewing, embroidery, weaving, all-season vegetable gardening, home economics, health practices and child care. This kind of training leads to higher production and income, which means greater self-reliance for the individual women.

Projects like those in Bangladesh provide Third World women with a trade that does more than just put food on the table. Women with skills are also able to produce consumer goods for the society they live in. This contributes to the broader aims of human resource development and self reliance.

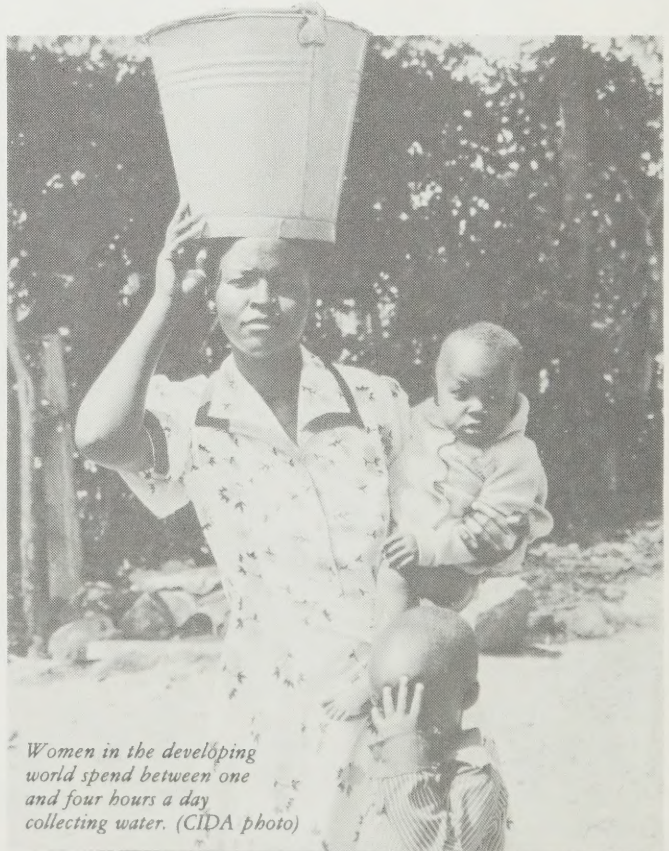
In some areas of the developing world 70 per cent of the female population is employed in rural agriculture; the

other 30 per cent seek work in the cities if they are able to work at all. However, many of the impoverished urban women are trapped in low-paying, non-skilled jobs, and they work in unhealthy conditions. Over two-thirds of factory-bound women cannot read or write, and so are unable to overcome economic discrimination or to improve their skills. This results in great economic waste of a developing country's potential for social improvements.

Despite growing awareness among experts that women must be integrated into all aspects of development, millions continue to live on the edge of survival. Women put in two-thirds of the world's working hours, receive one-tenth of the world's income and own one-hundredth of the world's property. Two out of every three illiterate people in the world are women. The World Health Organization says that one of the most important and ignored health problems in the world of the 1980s is *that millions of women are suffering from "chronic exhaustion"*. While boys have little to do but play until they are eight, their sisters are already performing all the chores of womanhood. As women, they will work twice as hard as men, facing 16-hour days as they struggle to meet the basic needs of their families — for food, water, firewood, clothes, health care and a home.

In the case of younger women, such workloads are commonly combined with frequent pregnancy, childbirth and breast feeding — tiring processes for any woman, but particularly exhausting with long hours of back-breaking work in the fields and inadequate food, since women are usually the last to eat at meal time.

The rights, needs and contributions of women can no longer be ignored. Unless women are allowed to play their rightful role in the developmental process, there will be no real economic and social progress.



Women in the developing world spend between one and four hours a day collecting water. (CIDA photo)

The wood famine

In its many forms, wood is a fundamental resource. It provides heat and power for much of the Third World. Most of Africa, Asia and Latin America are experiencing a critical shrinking of their forests. The poorer countries are entering what many experts are calling a "wood famine".

Heavily forested regions — covering at most 20 per cent of the earth's land — are disappearing at the rate of 1.2 per cent annually. That's about eleven million hectares, an area the size of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick combined.

Although timber is used throughout the world, wood shortages hurt the poor the most. More than 80 per cent of the Third World's 3.4 billion people depend on wood for cooking and heating. Urban families in parts of West Africa and Central America spend 25 per cent of their income on fuelwood.

The main cause of deforestation is the result of slash-and-burn farming. An estimated 400 million transient farmers clear and burn forest land, plant crops over the few seasons the land is fertile, then move on and repeat the process. The farmers often leave unproductive, concrete-like soil in their wake.

Harvesting of fuelwood is the second-largest threat to the forests: 80 per cent of the wood consumed in Third World countries is used for cooking and heating. Harvesting to the point of complete devastation is happening more and more often. In parts of Tanzania, a family member must spend a full day every day looking for a supply of wood.

Many Third World countries export timber to richer, industrialized countries to earn the foreign exchange to purchase necessary, but expensive, imports like machinery. Much of this timber is turned into plywood and lumber which is taken for granted in most developed countries. Each year, the average Canadian consumes about as much wood, in the form of paper, as the average Third World resident burns as cooking fuel.

Continued deforestation could also have a negative impact on people living in Europe and North America. Scientists are concerned that over-exploitation of the Amazonian rain forest could alter oxygen levels and environmental patterns in North America. Destruction of the forests would also destroy a priceless storehouse of biological knowledge.

In the tropical rainforests there are an estimated three million different species of plants, animals and micro-organisms. Scientists have named and classified only about one-sixth of them. At the present rate of deforestation, one million species will become extinct during the next 30 to 40 years. Almost half of all prescription drugs in Canada come from plant or animal sources. Numerous drugs used in cancer research are derived from tropical plants and their loss would be a major setback to fighting the disease.

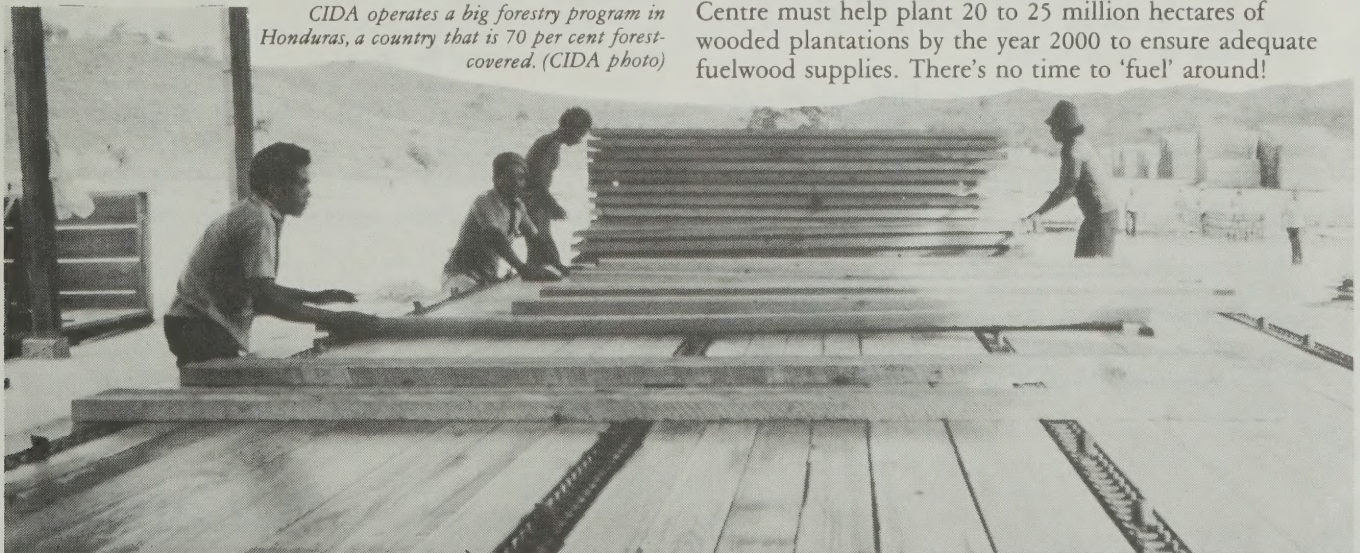
What can be done to prevent further deforestation? Because wood is used mainly for burning, wood-conserving stoves, biogas reactors and solar cookers can help to stretch remaining reserves of fuelwood, while tree-planting programs become established. For example, Inter Pares — a non-governmental organization funded through CIDA — is setting up workshops to produce energy efficient stoves in Upper Volta. Complete with its own chimney to carry the smoke outside the home, the stove is improving health conditions as well as saving energy and money. The traditional cooking method of resting a pot on stones over a wood fire resulted in smoke inhalation and the women of Upper Volta were particularly vulnerable to smoke-related illnesses.

In Honduras, where 70 per cent of the country is forested, CIDA helped carry out a forest inventory in the 150 million hectare central forest area. The inventory, together with the training of professionals and technicians, is providing the sound base from which Honduras can develop plans to manage and develop its rich forest resources.

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) recently established a forest tree seed centre in Thailand. The ASEAN region (Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand) has one of the world's most valuable reserves of tropical hardwood forest which is being depleted rapidly. The seed centre will help develop tree orchards to provide a large supply of quality tree seeds. The seedlings will be used to carry out vigorous reforestation programs, establish plantations to protect watersheds and agricultural land, and provide fuelwood near human settlements. The seed centre is funded roughly equally by Canada and the ASEAN countries.

At the present rate of deforestation, 50 per cent of the world's forests will vanish by the year 2000. According to the World Bank, projects like the ASEAN Tree Seed Centre must help plant 20 to 25 million hectares of wooded plantations by the year 2000 to ensure adequate fuelwood supplies. There's no time to 'fuel' around!

CIDA operates a big forestry program in Honduras, a country that is 70 per cent forest-covered. (CIDA photo)



The population time bomb

The world's population will double within the lifetime of most people reading this page. Nearly all of this increase will take place in the South. This rapid population growth is a serious obstacle to development in the countries of the South — often called the Third World.

The latest population statistics show that in some Third World countries birth rates are beginning to decline. However, because of an earlier population explosion, there are now vast numbers of young people who are entering their childbearing years. Thirty-nine per cent of the population is under 15 years of age; 67.4 per cent under 29 years. Even if each young couple has only two children, there will still be huge population growth.

Adding another dimension to the population picture is the death rate. Due to improvements in Third World health care, old people are living longer, and babies stand a better chance of making it through the early years.

Many Third World family planning programs have failed to make a dent in population growth. Most poor families want many children. In the daily struggle to survive, large families are seen as an asset: children bring security in illness and old age, help in the fields and homes, and hope and joy into lives that often have little of either. Without an improvement in their economic and social well-being, family planning advice will not be welcomed by Third World parents. The same held true for our predecessors: it is only over the last few generations that Canadian families

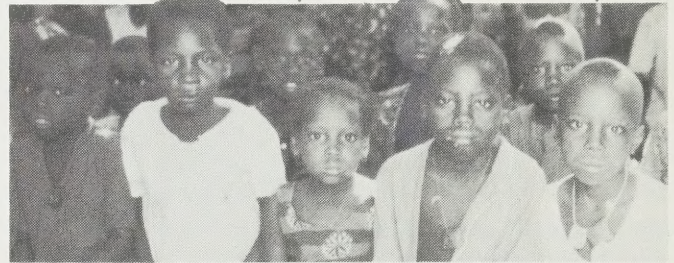
have become smaller as a result of our urbanization and industrial development, making children economic dependents rather than assets.

For agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities working in the Third World, improvements in education, health, and economic security are priority activities.

Education programs are designed to give people the skills necessary to improve their own standard of living. Because people who can read and write are better able to learn new farming techniques, or new methods of sanitation and health care, so they can create a better life out of the resources available to them.

Education is also being used as a tool to give women a wider role in society, not just as child bearers. One of the most effective ways to cut dangerous rates of population growth is to educate women; when they learn that there are better ways to live, change becomes possible.

These and other steps must be taken to ensure that the nightmarish vision of a hopelessly overcrowded planet does not become a reality in the next century.



Huge numbers of young people in the Third World are entering their child-bearing years. (CIDA photo: J. Williamson) ►



Canadian International
Development Agency

Agence canadienne de
développement international

Perspectives on Development

The biggest story happening today is the struggle of so many of the world's people to survive, to overcome poverty, and to build themselves a better life. This is where the real action is found, where the most compelling human dramas are being played out, and where our own future can be glimpsed.

As citizens of the global village in which only one person in 200 is Canadian, we need the best possible idea of how other people live and what they are trying to achieve if we are to have a say in determining our collective future. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then it is very important that Canadians have access to films that show the reality of life as it is lived by most of our fellow humans. For this reason, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has joined with film institutes to make available *Perspectives on Development* — a comprehensive, evaluative guide to films on development.

It is hoped that teachers find this guide useful for its greatest impact should be on students. In the long run, it is students who can most benefit from an enlarged, developmental perspective. Today's young people have the most at stake in the North-South dialogue because their lives will be affected by the outcome for many decades. *Perspectives* ... provides some of the information young people need to make the decisions that will help determine that outcome.

For information on *Perspectives on Development*, please write to:

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